

Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project
Environmental Assessment

Yosemite National Park

Lead Agency: National Park Service

ABSTRACT

The National Park Service (NPS) is considering the rehabilitation, restoration, and resurfacing of the Yosemite Valley Loop Road within Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park, California. Maintenance repairs have not been made on many areas of the roadway and associated drainage facilities for many years, and visitor safety is a growing concern along this heavily-used travel corridor.

This Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project Environmental Assessment is intended to guide the resurfacing and improvement of the Yosemite Valley Loop Road and associated drainage facilities. The Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project Environmental Assessment evaluates the potential impacts of the project. The park initiated public scoping for this project in May 2005. The Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project Environmental Assessment identifies and analyzes three alternatives: Alternative 1 – the No Action Alternative; Alternative 2 – Rehabilitation of and Improvements to the Roadway, Drainages and Roadside Parking (the preferred alternative); and Alternative 3 – Resurfacing the Roadway Only with Drainage Improvements.

Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative, represents the continuation of current management practices as they apply to road maintenance and drainage facilities along the Yosemite Valley Loop Roadway in Yosemite Valley. This includes the ongoing repairs and maintenance required to ensure safe vehicular and bicycle traffic along the roadway, as well as hydrologic flow beneath the road. This alternative provides the basis for comparison of each action alternative. The action alternatives (Alternatives 2 and 3) are based on the purpose of and need for the project and conform with, but are not tiered to the goals of Yosemite National Park's *General Management Plan* (NPS 1980) and goals and management elements of the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)* (NPS 2005a) [herein referred to as the *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS*].

Alternative 2 would implement the Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project with improvements to the roadway and drainages. This alternative would include pulverization and resurfacing of the roadway to a standardized width of 22 feet, the original road base width. This alternative would also provide improvements to roadside parking and culverts along the Yosemite Valley Loop Road. The installation of a permeable subgrade in test areas is also an action proposed under Alternative 2.

Alternative 3 would implement the Yosemite Valley Loop Road Project with improvements to the roadway and drainages. This alternative would also include pulverization and resurfacing of the roadway to a standardized width of 22 feet, the original road base width. Roadside parking would be replaced-in-kind under Alternative 3. Turnouts that are paved would be repaved; turnouts that are graveled would be re-graded and graveled. Improvements to roadside drainage systems would be the same as those proposed under Alternative 2, with the exception of the installation of a permeable subgrade in some areas.

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